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# WISCONSIN PUBLIC HEALTH COUNCIL

*Assure safe and healthy people by monitoring progress on the state health plan,  
Healthiest Wisconsin 2020, and on the readiness for public health emergencies.*

DATE: February 28, 2013

TO: The Honorable Eloise Anderson  
Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

FROM: Gary Gilmore, MPH, PhD, MCHES  
Chair, Wisconsin Public Health Council

Terri Kramolis, RN, MSHA  
Chair, State Health Plan Quality Improvement Committee  
Wisconsin Public Health Council

RE: In Support of Early Care and Education Standards

The Wisconsin Public Health Council believes that *it takes the work of many to improve the health of all*. The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families is an important public health system partner. We commend you and the Early Childhood Advisory Council for your collaborative leadership to protect and improve the health of children and families in Wisconsin.

The work of the Early Childhood Advisory Council, while advancing your goals for early childhood and for children in foster care, supports our public health efforts to align policies and systems for better health. Shared leadership and collaboration between state governmental agencies directly benefit the public's health by creating conditions in which children and families can be healthy. The Wisconsin Public Health Council has taken formal action not only to acknowledge the contributions of your Department but to extend our hand in partnership in furtherance of child care licensing standards through your YoungStar Program.

The Wisconsin Public Health Council, authorized under Wisconsin Statutes s. 15.19(13) and s. 250.07(1m), oversees progress of *Healthiest Wisconsin 2020: Everyone Living Better, Longer*. Healthiest Wisconsin 2020 is Wisconsin's statewide public health agenda as required in Wisconsin Statutes, Section 250.07 (1) (a):  
<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/hw2020/index.htm>.

Throughout 2012 and to the present, we have been assessing progress and advancing policy recommendations regarding three specific focus areas in the agenda. These areas are:

1. Adequate, appropriate and safe food and nutrition
2. Physical activity
3. Chronic disease prevention and management

As a result of our progress reviews, we attest that:

- Strengthening childhood licensing standards through practical, low-cost measures (e.g., supporting breastfeeding, providing access to potable water, improving food and beverages served, and increasing teacher-led and unstructured physical activity to at least 60 minutes per day) through the YoungStar Program has widespread benefits that promote the health of young children and benefits families and child care staff.
- Strengthening the nutrition and physical activity criteria in YoungStar will improve the health of Wisconsin children at greatest risk for poor nutrition, inactivity and obesity.
- Early Care and Education providers need pre-service and ongoing training in nutrition and physical activity to incorporate these concepts into their programming and the environment. Similar concepts may be incorporated into foster parent pre-placement training.
- The 10 Steps to Breastfeeding-Friendly Child Care, Active Early and Healthy Bites resources have been created and disseminated to support the implementation of evidence-based activities by early care providers.
- The Early Childhood Advisory Council's Obesity Project Team recommendations provide a critical avenue to preventing childhood obesity and preventable chronic diseases.

In the near term, please expect a call from Margaret Schmelzer, MS, RN, State Health Plan Director, and Dr. James Sanders, member of the Public Health Council, to discuss this letter and identify ways in which the Wisconsin Public Health Council can partner with your Department and the Early Childhood Advisory Council, including reviewing the proposed obesity recommendations from the Council and supporting YoungStar.

Thank you.

Attachment:  
Healthiest Wisconsin 2020 Brochure

Copy:

Governor Scott Walker  
Dennis Smith, Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Health Services  
Jane Penner-Hoppe, Staff, Early Childhood Advisory Council  
Dianne Jenkins, Policy Initiatives Advisor  
Linda McCart, Policy Director, Office of Policy Initiatives & Budget  
Members, Wisconsin Public Health Council  
Henry Anderson, MD, State Health Officer  
Sandra L. K. Breitborde, Deputy Administrator, Division of Public Health  
Karen McKeown, MSN, RN, Administrator, Division of Public Health  
Patricia Guhleman, MS, Director, Office of Policy and Practice Alignment  
Susan Uttech, MS, Director, Bureau of Community Health Promotion  
Mary Pesik, RD, CD, Coordinator, Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Program  
Wisconsin Local Health Officers  
Regional Office Directors